2: Covarrubias R-5 (1930-1933) 1938
OF7 Bali OF7

The Balinese have often accused the Tenganans of cannibalism, which is of course indignantly denied and about which the Tenganans are extremely sensitive. But people from Karangasem and even renegade Tenganans tell naïve stories like this:

In olden days there were celebrations in which aged men were sacrificed and eaten, and once there were none left in Tenganan. For a long time the council had planned to rebuild the *balé agung*, the assembly hall, already in ruins. The wood for the pillars had been cut by the old men years before and was dry and well seasoned. But when the work was started and the time came to put up the pillars, the workers could not proceed, because nobody knew which was the bottom and which the top of the logs. In all Bali it is forbidden in a construction to stand a log "upside-down" — that is, in the opposite direction from which it grew. Work on the *balé agung* was interrupted and there was worry and confusion, until a young man announced that, if they swore to stop eating their old men, he would find a way to locate the right end of the logs. After long deliberations the council agreed and presently the young man produced his own grandfather, whom he had kept hidden for years in a rice granary. The old man measured each log, tied a rope in the exact centre, and had it lifted up; the end closer to the roots was heavier and the log tilted in that direction, so the council could proceed with their work, and old men could continue to live.

I have been told by Balinese that in Tenganan today a corpse is washed with water that is allowed to drip into a sheaf of unhusked rice placed under the body. The rice is then dried in the sun, threshed, and cooked. After the burial a human figure is made of the cooked rice which is served to the dead man's descendants, who proceed to eat it, each asking for some part — the head, an arm, and so forth — a funeral dinner that may well signify the ritual eating of the corpse to absorb its magical powers. This, of course, is pure hearsay which I could not verify through my Tenganan friends.

The Balinese also believe that human beings were sacrificed